

Gen. Pace's mistakes

How convenient it is for the outgoing chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Peter Pace, to admit on the eve of his retirement to errors of judgment made in the Iraq war ("Top general acknowledges Iraq mistakes," Web site, Saturday).

The fact that our generals perpetually professed to Congress and the American people that we had adequate American troop levels in Iraq when the opposite has always been the case constitutes a dereliction of duty that continues to go unaddressed.

While leading American soldiers on patrols and trying to train Iraqi security forces in 2003 and 2005 in Al Anbar, Baghdad and Nineveh provinces, we, and many other officers operating at the tactical and operational levels, consistently conveyed to our superior officers the need for more troops. There simply was not enough manpower to support the security, humanitarian and nation-building efforts.

To this end, our generals nei-

ther served their purpose nor did what they were promoted to do — take care of the soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen under their charge, fight for their units and lead by example.

How is it that no senior officer has served any jail time for the Abu Ghraib prison scandal? Why did our senior leaders think "search and destroy" was going to be any more effective in Iraq than it was in Vietnam? How is it that the officers responsible for lying about Pat Tillman's death were only given notional reprimands? Why has no American officer been held accountable for hundreds of thousands of missing weapons and equipment in Iraq? Why is it that the only general officers who have spoken up about failed war strategy are retired?

It is simply astonishing that through the incompetence and self-delusion of these men, who have disgraced the uniform, an insurgency and terrorists have grown stronger, and overall, our military posture is weakened.

Even now, Gens. David H. Petraeus and Raymond Odierno count their temporary successes with a minuscule force of 160,000 soldiers and Marines but are as silent as church mice over the need for additional forces to make the gains more permanent.

In fact, we're already talking about a reduction in forces when any general who possessed the competence of say, a captain, would be telling Congress to triple the size of the Army and Marines or cut our losses.

Time will tell how this ugly and terrible debacle will unfold, but the history of our military leaders during this era will ultimately reveal the truth and extent of their dereliction.

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